and highland meadows. Water is abundant and swift perennial streams from icy springs cut the landscape. Many of the mountains are capped with snow throughout the year, and the plains around Sulaymaniya constitute one of the most verdant areas in Iraq. The region has suffered extensive deforestation, but poplar and willow abound along the watercourses and a few stands of heavier timber, such as oak, may yet be found in the uplands. The rivers and streams offer fish, and bear, ibex, snow leopards, and wolves are still to be encountered on the mountainsides. Save at the highest elevations, the area is blasted by the sun in summer, scorching the vegetation, but to a lesser extent than in the plains to the south. With the winter season of rain and snow, many of the passes are blocked for several months. The temperatures in either summer or winter, however, are not extreme. In spring the meadows are filled with brightly-colored flowers, particularly the poppy, but their life is short before the onset of the summer heat.

The Kurdish town of Rowanduz is to be found in the mountains fifty miles northeast of Erbil. In older days Rowanduz was directly on the trade route between Erbil and Iran, but the recent construction of an automobile highway by the British has removed it from the main stream of what remains of this traffic.[1] The exact antiquity of the town is uncertain, but it first achieved prominence as the headquarters of Kor Pasha, a chieftain who gained temporary

[1] Recounted in Hamilton, 1937.

irregularities of the slope, and the general process 361
has been one of building around or avoiding them. It might also be remembered that this is a new town, built up since the destruction of the old in the valley in 1917.

The streets and lanes are unpaved, their surfaces 363
the rough face of the rock, resembling in most cases a hard, cobblestone pavement. As many of them are precipitous, accidents, particularly at night, are not uncommon, and in the winter of 1950 two persons suffered broken limbs by losing their footing. There is a "main thoroughfare," a central artery of travel to which most lanes lead, corresponding in part to the street leading through the bazar. On reaching the top of the bluff by the steep, winding automobile road from the valley, two streets branch out around the serai and join together just before the bazar to form the principal street and center. Where the bazar merges with the upper residential section, two lanes, more important than others, divide to skirt the hill which dominates this upper area and join again above the town. Along the streets, the open spaces between the houses 351
are often lined with fences, either of rubble or of inter- 361
woven branches, usually enclosing a garden. The lots left vacant are either barren soil, such as the "brickyard" noticed above, or covered with tough, long grass and scrub [137]
vegetation. A number of trees grow unattended along the edges of the cliffs, but almost all others are confined to the gardens and yards of private dwellings.

put on dark coloured clothing, black or deep blue. For 765
most persons, an annual visit to the grave is required, and at this time a sheep is sacrificed and its flesh distributed to the poor. Wealthier persons may enjoy weekly visits and sacrifices, and those of the lower classes must often ignore even the yearly sacrifice. The funerals 764
of women and children, depending on the status of their 562
husbands or fathers, are conducted with less ostentation. 858
There is no definite pattern of commemoration, weekly or annual, and, in answer to the inquiry, it was always said that these memorial parties of both men and women visited the grave "as long as all shall live."

The cemetery of Rowanduz occupies the flat crest of 764
the hill behind the town, and is dominated by a large oak tree, one of the few in the area, a point which will be [137]
encountered again. The graves are oriented in parallel lines with their heads pointed to the northwest. Most are oblong mounds plastered with mortar rising about a foot above the surface of the ground with a crudely hewn slab of stone, several feet in height, at each end. In some cases, the headstone of one serves as the foot of the next. Only a few have inscriptions, some etched and
others carved in relief, and there was only one sarcophagus [211]
in the graveyard, a box of stone slabs bound with metal clasps and elaborately carved decorations. Family burial plots are separated by low fences of interlaced thorn. Two graves were surrounded by a low, quadrilateral rubble 766
wall, indicating the grave of a sayyid, a descendant of

Shaykh Muhammad at Hajji Umran. This is the most famous of the group and is believed to effect miraculous cures. It is said that the Shepherd used to take out the sheep of Shaykh Muhammad each day. The pasturage was not good, and Shaykh Muhammad wondered why his sheep were so fat and healthy. One day he concealed himself and was amazed to see the Shepherd fly off through the air, with the sheep flying behind him in a line, to some rich, faroff mountain meadow. Thus Shaykh Muhammad learned of the power of this man, and asked the people to visit the Shepherd's grave before his own. A merchant in Rowanduz, one 'Abd al-Sattar, claimed to have cured an ailment which he described as "sand in the urine" by drinking water obtained near this shrine. 778 792 [773] [755]

Some of these shrines may be of considerable antiquity, and an indication of this is the fact that they are in most cases associated with trees. In a region which has almost been denuded of heavier timber, it is striking to find a lone oak on some barren hillside with the grave of a holy man beneath its branches. The townspeople of Rowanduz were unable to comment on this association, but investigation among the villagers might reveal some interesting views. It seems quite clear, however, that a pagan survival is represented here, a complex dating from a time in which some religious significance was attached to trees or groves. It might be remarked that cutting down such a tree, however great the need for wood, was believed to bring the greatest catastrophe. People visit these shrines for a variety of reasons, those suffering from some "incurable" malady, women who wish a male child, or man who believe themselves hampered by misfortune. The magical power in the person of the holy man, alive or dead, is termed baraka 778 824 [137] 778

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

Fig. 7. Rice fields in front of the mountains of Kurdistan.

The watercourses and springs

condition the siting of the villages. Some deep hits—three in a row—at Topzawa suggest the former use of *qanāts*. Watercourses and springs are dammed to form basins for the fetching of water and for washing purposes. Irrigation canals lead across the fields of vegetables and tobacco. In digging these canals mattocks (E. 2241) and foot plough[33], are used. The latter are worked by two men. The foot plough was seen in use down by the Lesser Zab on the terraced rice fields. Around the villages of Topzawa and Rakawa grow poplars, walnut trees, a few mulberry and fig trees. The hill sides have scattered growths of low oak. Above these villages lie the vineyards, the crop of which is used for must and dried to raisins. Around the villages of Sargalu, Balkha and Tawella, which have ample water, are big fruit plantations with plums, apricots and mulberries. The domestic animals are: cows and oxen, *gā*, fat-tailed sheep, brown and black goats, *hēle*, donkeys, *kār*, and mules, *kerr*, with ducks, *fowh* and geese. Horses, *asp*, are kept as a luxury and ridden with a curb bit[34]. There are also big, yellow sheep dogs and for hunting (wild pig and bear) Persian greyhounds[35]. At 5 a.m. the cows are driven out of the village from the individual houses by children and old women. During the day the animals grazing on the slopes are guarded by young men. At 6-7 p.m. the animals are driven back

137 with scrub or stunted oak on the hillsides and poplars, walnuts and mulberries near the villages. Plane grow in two areas only and chinars (planes) along the streams. Unfortunately, deforestation is proceeding apace, and unless immediate and drastic steps are taken by the 'Iraq Government, heavy soil erosion and a tremendous decrease in grazing facilities will take place. Few new walnut trees are to be found owing to a prevalent superstition that the planter of a walnut tree will die with the appearance of the first nuts. It might be supposed that the elder inhabitants could be employed in planting, but apparently the grandfathers look askance at this suggestion!

K 181 The Kurds are a virile and cheerful people. They have been called treacherous, and undoubtedly stories can be quoted in support of this accusation. Yet it must be remembered that the annals of our own Scottish highlands are by no means clean in this respect.

K 164 221 342 In the summer the valleys of Kurdistan are, unfortunately, very malarial, and this is favoured by the cultivation of rice with its invariable accompaniment of mosquitoes. During this season most of the Kurd-owners move to their "aliabas" or summer dwellings on the mountain tops, where, in shelters of oak branches, they pass the time pleasantly enough.

Christians

I 795 The Christians of the northern provinces are divided into numerous sects, several of which are relics of the old schismatic divisions of the Eastern Communion. They include Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics, who are under the control of Rome, Jacobites, Armenians, Nestorians and Seventh Day Adventists.

I 795 467 583 648 162 Chaldeans, Syrian Catholics and Jacobites are found in Mosul and many villages on the left bank of the Tigris. Chaldeans are also found in the Supna valley near Amadia and in one large village near Arbil. Seventh Day Adventists only flourish in Mosul. Many people in England know something of the Assyrians and their ancient history. The Assyrians themselves claim to be descendants of the famous kingdom of Nineveh and are certainly semitic. The term "Assyrian" now includes ex-Ottoman members of the Nestorian Church who were domiciled either within what is now the 'Iraq state or who were ejected from Hakkari by the Turks during the Great War and refused